Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 95±054N]

International Standard-Setting Activities, Codex Alimentarius Commission; Duties of United States Delegates and Delegation Members Including Non-Government Members

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; Request for comments.

SUMMARY: This notice describes the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex); describes the duties of the United States delegate and alternate delegate to Codex committees; provides the criteria and procedures to be used in selecting non-government members to various United States delegations to Codex committees; describes the appropriate role of non-government members on Codex committees; identifies the manner in which the public will be informed of and may participate in Codex activities; and requests comments on these matters.

DATES: Comments should be submitted by May 13, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit one original and two copies of written comments to: FSIS Docket Clerk, Docket #095±054N, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Room 102, Cotton Annex, 300 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20250±3700. All comments submitted in response to this notice will be available for public inspection in the Docket Clerk's Office between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: F. Edward Scarbrough, Ph.D., United States Manager for Codex Alimentarius, Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety, United States Department of Agriculture, Room 4861S, Washington, DC 20250±3700; (202) 205±7760.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Codex is the joint food standards program of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). This 35-year-old program was established to help protect the health of consumers and to facilitate trade through the establishment of international food standards, codes of practice and other guidelines. Through adoption of food standards, codes of practice, and other guidelines developed by its committees and by promoting their adoption and implementation by governments, Codex seeks to facilitate world trade in foods and promote consumer protection.

The Codex comprises representatives of more than 150 member nations. It meets every two years. It adopts draft and final standards, guidelines and codes of practice, and assigns new work to its subsidiary bodies. These subsidiary bodies perform the work of developing the standards, guidelines and recommendations. The subsidiary bodies include Regional Coordinating Committees, Commodity Committees, and General Subject Matter Committees. An Executive Committee of the Codex is responsible for making recommendations about the general direction of the Commission's work. The Executive Committee, which meets every year, acts as the executive organ of the Commission and may make decisions for the Codex subject to their approval at the next biennial Codex session. Regional coordinating committees ensure that the work is responsive to regional interests and to developing countries. The Codex has set up commodity committees and general subject matter committees. These are the groups that draft standards and make recommendations to the Codex. The U.S. participates in all active General Subject Matter and Commodity Committees and in the Regional Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific.

In the United States, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA); the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); and the Department of Commerce (DOC) manage and carry out U.S. Codex activities. Executive direction to the effort comes from the U.S. Manager for Codex, supported by the U.S. Codex Office. The U.S. Delegates to the subsidiary bodies participate in the development of standards. These delegates and the alternate delegates are government officials in USDA, FDA, EPA and DOC. The delegates develop U.S. positions on issues to be considered. All interested parties are invited to provide information and comments on the issues. As the delegates prepare for the meetings of their committees, they form delegations comprised of individuals having an interest in the issues and whose expertise they think would be helpful or necessary at the meetings. These individuals participate as members of the official U.S. Delegations, at their own expense.

I. Appointment and Responsibilities of the U.S. Delegate to Codex

A. The United States Codex Steering Committee selects, and the United States Manager for Codex Alimentarius appoints, a United States delegate as the head of the United States delegation to each Codex committee and an alternate delegate to act in the absence of the United States delegate. The U.S. Delegate and the alternate delegate will be full time federal government employees.

B. The United States delegate, or in his absence, the alternate delegate, is responsible for representing the United States Government at all Codex committee sessions and for presenting the United States position on each agenda item at Codex committee sessions. It is the United States delegate's responsibility to ascertain the United States Government's current position on each Codex committee agenda item and to draft the United States Government's response to each agenda item. Positions presented by the United States delegate should be based on sound science and take into account United States statutes, regulations, and policy. The United States delegate may determine that a proposed Codex standard that is not consistent with existing United States statutes, regulations, or policies is worthy of consideration and may, in that case, refer the proposed Codex standard to the United States agency responsible for

accepting or not accepting a particular Codex standard.

C. The United States delegate, in consultation with the United States Manager for Codex Alimentarius, is responsible for selecting non-governmental members to serve on the United States delegation to the Codex committee.

II. Formation of Delegations

A. The United States delegate, in consultation with the United States Manager for Codex Alimentarius, selects a delegation.

B. The number of the United States delegation members, including government and non-government members, is limited to a maximum of twenty-five persons for each Codex committee.

C. The United States delegate will strive to form a delegation that: (1) Has expertise relevant to the items on the agenda of, or likely to be discussed at, the particular Codex committee session; (2) can assist the United States delegate with items on the agenda of, or likely to be discussed at the particular Codex committee session; (3) is representative of the individuals, groups, and organizations that have an interest in the items on the agenda of, or likely to be discussed at the particular Codex committee session; and (4) is representative of the individuals, groups, and organizations that could be affected by standards to be considered at the Codex session.

D. With regard to selection of non-government members to delegations, the United States delegate will consider the following: (1) The necessity of obtaining the informed views of non-government individuals during the Codex committee session; (2) whether consultations or opportunities to provide written comments prior to the Codex committee session would be an adequate alternative to including non-government members on the United States delegation; and (3) the number of non-government members that would be required on the United States delegation to provide balanced representation of the individuals, groups, and organizations that have an interest in the items on the agenda of, or likely to be discussed at, a particular Codex committee session and could be affected by standards to be considered at the Codex session.

III. Application and Selection Procedures for Non-Government Members

A. Individuals and representatives from groups and organizations interested in becoming members of the United States delegation should contact the United States delegate or the Office of the United States Manager for Codex Alimentarius.

B. The United States delegate: (1) Will consider all requests for membership on the United States delegation; (2) may seek volunteers for membership on the United States delegation; and (3) may identify and solicit for membership on the United States delegation non-government individuals and representatives from groups or organizations that will result in a delegation that meets the criteria in paragraph II.C. of this notice.

C. The United States delegate may select non-government members from labor groups, the academic community, trade associations, specific business firms, public interest groups, and from other sources, including the public at large. The United States delegate will not be required to select more than one representative from the same non-governmental organization to become a member of the United States delegation merely because the non-governmental organization represents more than one entity or because there are differing views among individuals or entities within the non-governmental organization.

D. The United States delegate may request that any person interested in becoming a member of the United States delegation submit for consideration a written summary of his or her qualifications. This summary should include information pertinent to the work carried out under the general terms of reference of the committee, as well as to particular items on the agenda of, or likely to be discussed at, upcoming Codex committee sessions.

E. The United States delegate may limit the period of participation on, and may exclude from, the United States delegation any non-government member whose conduct is: (1) Contrary to the provisions of this notice; (2) contrary to limitations or prohibitions imposed by the United States delegate pursuant to this notice or other authority; or (3) prejudicial to the interest of the United States Government, including the effective functioning of the United States delegation. No non-government member, however, may be excluded from the United States delegation merely because of views provided in good faith to other members of the United States delegation, nor may a non-government member be excluded from the United States delegation for declining to provide views on a matter based upon the non-government member's belief that his or her views would be inappropriate or prejudicial to the United States Government's position.

IV. Responsibilities on Non-Government Members on U.S. Codex Committee Delegations

A. Non-government members should attend all Codex committee sessions and be available to assist the United States delegate, upon request. In addition, all members of the United States delegation are expected to attend delegation meetings convened by the United States delegate.

B. A member of a United States delegation may not serve concurrently during a Codex committee session as a member of any other country's delegation or on the delegation of an accredited observer to the Codex session.

C. Non-government members are not permitted to speak with foreign government officials on behalf of the United States Government at any Codex committee session. However, the United States delegate may authorize a non-government member to explain a technical or factual point, if, in the judgement of the United States delegate: (1) the explanation by the non-government member will advance United States Government objectives at the Codex committee session; or (2) the non-government member is best able to explain the technical or factual point under discussion.

D. To the extent feasible, the United States delegate will consult with and seek recommendations from non-government members, but will not be obliged to present at any Codex committee session any recommendation made by any non-government member.

E. Non-government members shall not at any time negotiate or purport to negotiate for the United States Government. Non-government members shall not take any individual action on behalf of the United States Government without express permission from the United States delegate. Non-government members shall not advocate positions outside of the United States delegation during a Codex committee session that would tend to undermine the position of the United States Government, as determined by the United States delegate. However, membership on the United States delegation by a non-government member does not prohibit any other individual, including an individual from the same organization as the non-government member, from expressing views that are not in accordance with the United States Government's position. Further, no non-government member of the United States delegation shall be prohibited

from expressing views on the outcome of a negotiation after conclusion of the negotiation or Codex committee session.

F. Non-government members are not immune from any laws or regulation of the United States or of the host country as a result of participation on a United States delegation, and no government official may represent that participation confers any such immunity.

V. Public Notification of and Participation in U.S. Codex

A. The Office of the United States Manager for Codex Alimentarius publishes annually in the **Federal Register** a notice containing (1) Descriptions of the standards under consideration or planned for consideration by Codex committees and whether the United States is participating in the consideration of those standards; (2) the agenda for United States participation in Codex committee; (3) the agency responsible for representing the United States with regard to each standard under consideration or planned for consideration by Codex committees; and (4) a list of the Codex committees and the names and agency affiliations of the United States delegate and alternate delegate for each committee. This same information is available through the U.S. Codex website: http://www.usda.gov/agency/fsis/codex/index.htm. Also, the United States Manager for Codex Alimentarius maintains a list of non-government individuals, groups, and organizations that have expressed an interest in the activities of the Codex.

B. The United States delegate and alternate delegate will facilitate, to the greatest extent possible, public participation in the United States Government activities relating to the Codex. Toward this end, the United States delegate will maintain a list of individuals, groups, and organizations that have expressed an interest in activities of the Codex committees.

C. The United States delegate will notify members of the public who have indicated an interest in a particular Codex committee's activities of the status of each agenda item and the United States Government's position or preliminary position on the agenda item, if such a position has been determined. The United States delegate may request members of the public who have indicated an interest in a particular Codex committee's activities to submit written comments. Public meetings may also be held to receive comments.

D. As required by section 491 of the Trade Agreement Act of 1979, as amended, (19 U.S.C. 2578), the agency responsible for accepting or rejecting a particular Codex sanitary or phytosanitary standard shall provide opportunity for public comment on the Codex standards under consideration or planned for consideration. This opportunity for public comment will be provided as early as possible following the identification of a sanitary or phytosanitary standard for consideration by a Codex committee. The comments received will be taken into account in the United States delegate's participation in the considerations of the Codex committee.

E. The United States delegate may solicit comments as deemed appropriate and all comments received will be considered. Public comments relevant to Codex committee activities should be supported by as much data or research as possible and such data or research should be properly referenced to enhance the persuasive impact of the comments. The United States delegate will consider all comments received but will not be bound to agree with any comment. The views expressed in these comments may or may not be presented by the United States delegate to a Codex committee.

Done at Washington, DC, on February 6, 1998.

F. Edward Scarbrough,

United States Manager for Codex Alimentarius.

[FR Doc. 98±3507 Filed 2±11±98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410±DM±P

ARCTIC RESEARCH COMMISSION

February 4, 1998.

Notice of Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the U.S. Arctic Research Commission will hold its 50th Meeting in Washington, DC on February 23 and 24, 1998.

The Meeting will be held in the Board Room of the U.S. National Museum of Natural History (Smithsonian Institution), first floor, Constitution Avenue at Tenth Street, NW, and will begin at 9:00 a.m. on both days. Attendees must use the Constitution Avenue Entrance.

Topics for the meeting include agency reports and a special focus on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Process. BLM and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will make presentations on their EIS work in the U.S. Arctic. A report on the recent cruise of the USS Hawkbill nuclear submarine research cruise in the Arctic Ocean will also be presented.

Any person planning to attend the Tuesday meeting who requires special accessibility features and/or auxiliary aids, such as sign language interpreters must inform the Commission in advance of those needs.

Contact Person for More Information: Dr. Garrett W. Brass, Executive Director, Arctic Research Commission, 703±525±0111 or TDD 703±306±0090.

Garrett W. Brass,

Executive Director.

[FR Doc. 98±3596 Filed 2±11±98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7555±01±M

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Submission For OMB Review; Comment Request

DOC has submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. chapter 35).

Agency: Bureau of the Census.

Title: Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal Integrated Coverage Measurement (ICM) Person Interview and Outmover Tracing Activities.

Form number(s): CAPI Person Interview, CAPI Person QA Interview, CATI Outmover Tracing Interview, and DX±1340.

Agency approval number: None.

Type of request: New collection.

Burden: 11,175 hours.

Number of respondents: 28,400.

Avg hours per response: About 19 minutes.

Needs and uses: The Bureau of the Census developed the Integrated Coverage Measurement (ICM) approach for measuring coverage of housing units and populations during the decennial census. In the Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal, we are interested in conducting a rehearsal of our ICM approach to measuring the coverage of the census for housing units and people.

The first phase of ICM consists of developing an independent listing of all addresses within the Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal sites. The independent listing will be matched to the census list of addresses; the unmatched cases will be sent to the field for reconciliation during the Housing Unit Follow-up operation. The resultant address listing will be used in the ICM Person Interview phase. The materials for the independent listing have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The materials for the Housing Unit Follow-up operation are currently awaiting OMB approval.

During the ICM Person Interview, the Bureau of the Census will interview target ICM sample cases. Intensive probing techniques will be used to